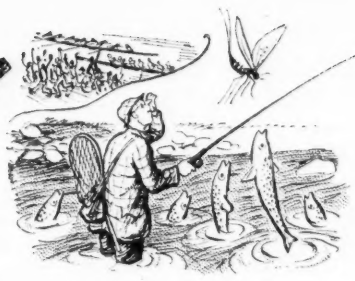




PUNCH

OR

THE LONDON CHARIVARI



Vol. CXCVI, No. 5,120

May 24 1939

Charivaria

It is stated on excellent authority that Tube railway-carriages capable of holding twice as many people are being contemplated, so that four times as many people will be able to squeeze into them.

The number of marks a foreign visitor to Germany may bring out of the country has been reduced from thirty to ten. This is known as the watch on the Rhino.

We are informed that when a large wave swept up the beach at a South Coast resort recently, a number of bathers had a narrow escape from bathing.



"BLOW TO AGGRESSION"
Daily Dispatch.
And boo to the goose-step.

"Page Amuses Guests
at Society Wedding," says
a picture caption. We are
not presuming anything,
mind.

"When you are faced
with a difficult problem,
sleep on it," advises a business magnate. Holiday-makers
who can't find anywhere to put up for the night should
appreciate this tip.

"On Saturday, Bewdley Tennis Club's two new courts will be
opened by Mrs. H. N. Frost, at 3 p.m., and Alderman H. H. N.
Frost, at 3 p.m., and Alderman H. N. Frost will also be present. The
new courts are constructed to resist frost."—*Kidderminster Paper.*
They don't seem to have made a very good start.

"NEW £6642 FIRE STATION
The Ministry of Health have
sanctioned the expenditure of
£6643 on a new fire station for
Biggin Hill, Kent."

Evening Paper.

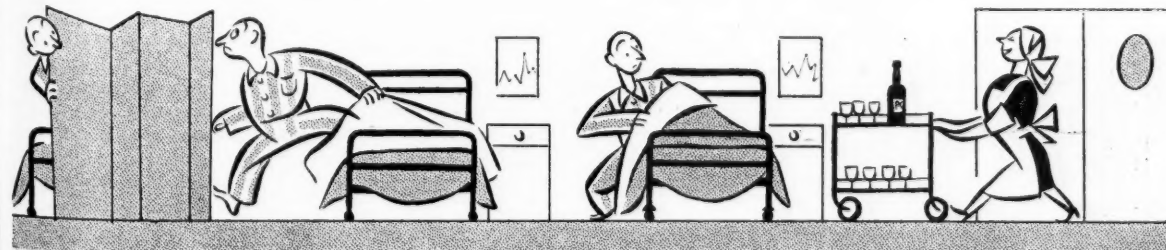
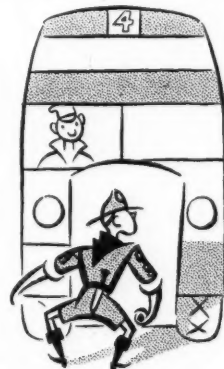
And not £6644, as previ-
ously stated.

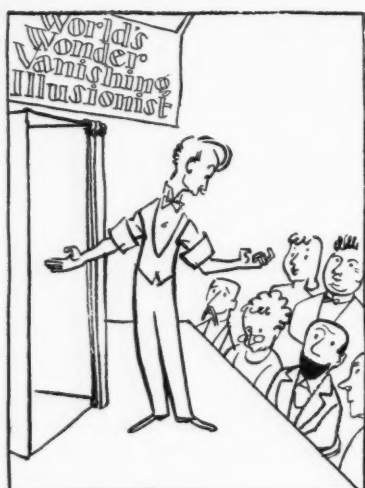
A Scouts' journal re-
minds us that a good turn
always brings some re-
ward. Try it on your car when the petrol tank is empty.

"DUCE SAYS 'WE WILL ACHIEVE OUR GOAL.'"
Headline in "Daily Telegraph," May 15.

By using their fists—like PIOLA?

An invalid port is being advertised at a shilling a bottle.
Possibly the price will be raised a bit when the port gets better.





"NOW you can take it from me, Mrs. Wilkins, that what a seaside establishment for summer boarders wants more than anything else is a visitors' book. It gives the place what they call a cachou. Hand it down, love, from the shelf behind you and you can see for yourself. My, how the dust does gather when you're all put away for the winter! —the which is a favourite remark of the young man who calls here regular with the vacuums, and if I've told him once I've told him a hundred times that I'd as soon think of driving a submarine to the North Pole as pay out all that money for something just to take up the dust, because anyway it's sand everywhere as soon as the season starts, and if you saw these rooms after some of the visitors we have here have finished with them you'd think it was A.R.P., with that nine inches of sand on the floors to keep the bombs out, though if it does come to that you won't find me staying on here in Shinglesea, not while I've got a married sister living in the country five miles from the nearest shop and even that not the sort of shop that anyone in their right senses would want to bomb; though whether people are in their right senses nowadays is something I know no more than the man in the moon.

"And you can see that what I mean by a visitors' book is not what they mean by a visitors' book at that silly Grand Hotel, with its dinner-dances twice a week that it thinks such a great thing for the visitors, and why people should want to dance while

Visitors' Book

they're having their dinner, unless it's to take their mind off the food, is just another of these mysteries, though last year I did have a young gentleman visitor who used to do exercises in his bedroom before breakfast, and you'd have thought that the end of the world had come from the complaints I got from the other visitors on account of the thumping and banging about. Because in the Grand Hotel all they expect them to put down are their names and nationality, that being the law and something to do with German spies, and you'd think that any German spy who did go and stay at the Grand Hotel, Shinglesea, would have more sense than to write down what he was in the visitors' book; but then you never know with people nowadays, and they have such queer visitors staying at the Grand Hotel that it wouldn't surprise me in the least to hear that they were all of them German spies, and if they stay there long they'll get the idea that there's a very bad shortage of food in this country from all accounts.

"But what I mean by a visitors' book is a book that's got a space for remarks and very often a bit of poetry, the which is always in great demand to read aloud when there's a wet day and the visitors have got nothing else to do; and really from the way some of them carry on when it rains for four days running like it did last year you'd think that we who keep seaside boarding establishments were personally responsible for the weather; though, as I always say to them, you get the good sea air whether it's raining or not. And another thing is that if you show them the book early on and let them know that they will have to write something in it before they go it gives them something to occupy their minds and sets them thinking of complimentary things to say about the place all the time they're here, the which is a very suitable attitude to encourage, because if you really put your mind to it you can always reckon you're enjoying yourself whatever happens. But you can see from the book that not all the visitors, even though warned well beforehand, have managed to think of anything very proper to say. For instance, just look at those remarks by that man from Manchester last year. There, you see: 'My holiday at Shinglesea has really been a treat, for now that I am leaving it, why even home seems sweet.'

"Well in a way that's only what it



says in the Shinglesea Guide, where it talks about people going home refreshed and invigorated after their holidays here, and it says a lot for Shinglesea if a gentleman can go back refreshed and invigorated to Manchester; but you'd have thought that the gentleman could have found a better way of putting it. Probably it was the only way he could make the rhymes fit in, that being always the danger of poetry, because there was a young lady who spent a whole afternoon trying to think of a rhyme for Shinglesea, and all she got at the end of it was 'bilious sea,' which is not really what I should call a rhyme at all, and anyway it is quite unsuitable for a visitors' book. But what I do hold and shall do until my dying day, without a word of a lie, is that poetry is not what it was in the old days. Why, if you turn back to somewhere near the beginning you'll see that there was a clerical gentleman from Winchester who wrote a piece in Latin, and nearly all the others expressed the most beautiful sentiments that people don't hardly ever seem to feel nowadays. There now, just listen to this: 'Here by the ever-rolling sea, behold my Paradise. The beds are very comfortable and reasonable the price.' And here's another one: 'Pleasant the company, majestic the scenery; the terms include laundry by latest machinery.'

"Well, Mrs. Wilkins, I do say that you don't get poetry like that these days. And for why? Because people aren't nowadays really interested in poetry nor yet any serious subjects. Once put a pen in their hands and the most pleasant-spoken gentlemen only think of one thing, the which is to be facetious; and if there is anything more than another which I can't abide it is faceesh. And if you ask me, it is all along of these nasty cinemas that people go to in the evenings nowadays instead of staying in their lodgings with perhaps a concert among themselves if there were any visitors specially gifted that way, for the which the piano in the front-room was always in great demand, though not now opened for years—and for all I know the mice have been at it. I give you my word, Mrs. Wilkins, that the tears used to come into my eyes when the Dean of Sighester sang 'The Lost Chord,' he having a beautiful baritone voice and coming here regular for the peace and quiet, and in those days peace and quiet was the one thing we had nothing else of but; though nowadays it is never what people seem to come here to go in for for."

"And so you can't make people play

the piano if they don't want to, though some of them bring their nasty noisy gramophones with them; nor yet you can't make them sing 'The Lost Chord' nor any other of the beautiful songs that the Dean of Sighester used to sing, and him not the only one, not by any means; but if you make up your mind to it you can see that they don't leave here without writing a piece of poetry in the visitors' book, and I say we owe it to ourselves to keep up the Shinglesea reputation for being the sort of place where serious people of the very highest class come to for their

holidays. And that is why I say that a visitors' book with remarks gives a place a cachou; and a cachou is the one thing that the Grand Hotel, for all its dinner-dances, never will have anything at all of."

H. W. M.

"Enid Stamp-Taylor—an actress who has been knocking loudly at the door for a number of years, but through no fault of her own, has only occasionally rung the bell—stole a show last night at the Embassy Theatre."—*Daily Paper*.

What did she do—blow a bugle?



"Have you heard our First Aid exam has been put off till Wednesday?"
 "What a nuisance! Now we shall have to remember it all for another day."

"I Was in Goatia."

LITTLE-KNOWN Goatia figures in the news to-day. Wedged tightly between the Gorblianian *massif* on the North, South, East, and West, and the long spine of the Stichomuthian hills in almost every other direction, marshy, malarial, mountainous, without roads, railways, sanitation, or restaurants, it might well seem at the first glance to be a nuisance to no one but itself; yet a longer study of the map will show its vital importance to any Power desirous of dominating the Poldanian waterways and the immense bean-bearing plateau of Cdnz.

To obtain the beans of Cdnz without going through Goatia it is necessary to go round it, underneath it, or over the top, and none of these methods are practicable, so that for hundreds of years the beans have remained unharvested, whilst the vast valley of the Pold, re-echoing with the cries of waterfowl, has been entirely innocent of navigation except for the passage of an occasional flute-playing fisherman in his old-fashioned Arimaspiian canoe.

Goatia is inhabited by Slunks.

I know that to make this statement categorically is to court an instant denial from hot-headed ethnographers, and many a glass of wine has been dashed in the face of historians at the Athenæum and elsewhere when they ventured on an observation so debatable both in fact and in theory; for it is not too much to say that the Slunks of Goatia, intermingled as they are by marriage, conquest, captivity and political incompetence with the Groods, the Bosthenians and even with the Blatts, have lost many of the finer marks of racial independence, while the invasions of their territory by the Turks in 1401, by the Greeks in 1523, by the Russians in 1681 and by the Austrians in the following century, involving the massacre of every man, woman and child and the destruction of all their *cusks* and *zlnszen* on every occasion, has rendered it extremely difficult to trace the records of their family life and the continuity of their political institutions.

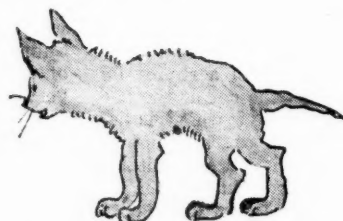
Yet once a Slunk always a Slunk.

No one who has witnessed, as I have, the haughty bearing, the flashing eyes, the contemptuous hostility to foreigners of this vendetta-loving people, no one who has slept as I have slept on the mud floors of their reed-woven habitations, sharing his bed, now with a wandering ass from the mountains, now with a heron, and now with a covey of centipedes, will deny that there is something which sets the inhabitants of Goatia apart from the other peoples of Europe and gives them an individuality, not the less striking because it is so rare.

To make friends with a Slunk you must give him first your dagger, secondly your purse. If you are unarmed, the second will suffice. It is the rarest thing for a Slunk to kill an unarmed stranger who complies with this simple formality and approaches his host, as custom ordains, upon his knees. Relations thus happily established, the Slunk is seldom so inhospitable as to refuse to a travelling visitor a few spoonfuls of the simple maize porridge which, with an occasional loach from the Pold, forms the staple food of these hardy mountaineers.

The meal is washed down either with mare's milk or the fiery red wine from the Gorblianian hills, made by the simple process of throwing unripe grapes into an enormous stone trough and crushing them with the feet of goats. The language, consisting of some five hundred substantives, four adjectives, no prepositions, and only one verb, is not easy for an Englishman to master owing to the great

profusion of nasal and guttural strepitations and the differences of dialect as between one *sandjak* and another. (Thus in Kywz the word "skcw" means a lodging for the night; in Mjyd it means a heavy blow on the head.)



WOLF CUB AT KYWZ

Yet despite these difficulties there is a rough charm about Goatia which, combined with its bracing atmosphere—fires are necessary even in midsummer, and the mule-hide underwear is seldom or never changed—must inevitably captivate the visitor and make him vow on returning to send as many of his friends as possible to explore its mysterious hinterland. Never shall I forget the long dance of the peasant maidens at Mjyd, when they set me in the middle of the circle and footed it around me, clapping their hands and every now and then coming out of the ring to pull my hair or chuck me violently under the chin.

And never shall I forget old Gritz, who entertained me with such charming courtesy for nearly five weeks, permitting me to hunt with him for wolf, bear, and marmot, and even to carry his guns and cartridge-belts up the rocky mountain passes—who sang to me at night the old Gorblianian and Goatian songs, and so, after a bout or two of wrestling and buffeting, to bed on the bare earth with a mere coverlet of untanned sheepskin to sleep the sleep of the just.

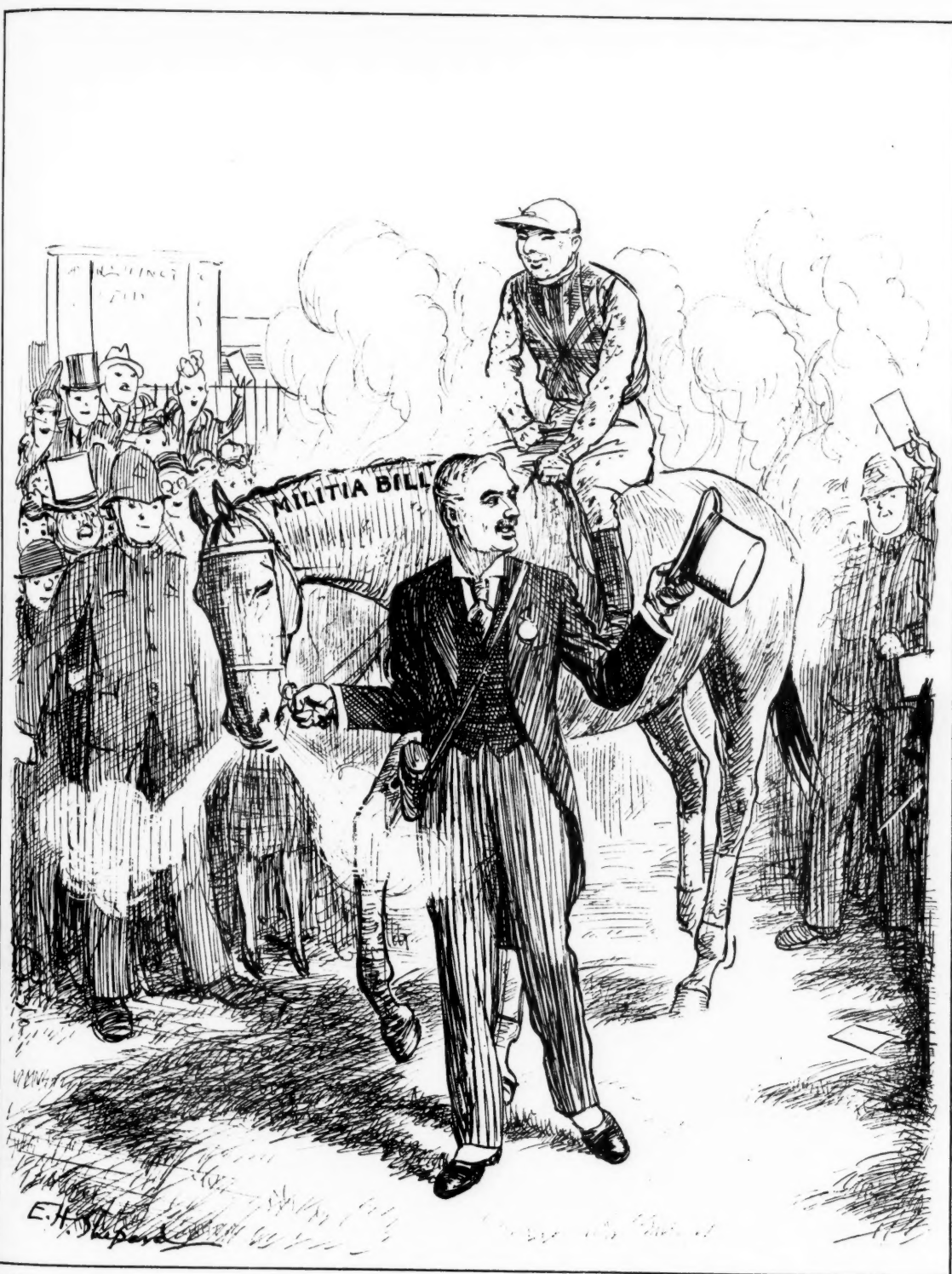
FAREWELL little Goatia! Perhaps I shall never see you again as I saw you last July, for now comes the tidings that a Great Unnamed Power intends to make a commercial treaty with you in order to secure access to the valley of the Pold and the great blue bean-fields in which I have so often squatted, looking up at the vultures which circled above me coming down from their eyries on the Stichomuthian hills.

An envoy, it seems, of this Great Power has tried to establish contact with the mayor or headman of the *zlnsje* of Bodz, and if it be true that the foreigner was struck twice in the face, tripped up and rolled headlong, even as I was rolled, down the rocky path into the waters of the Wryczw, there is trouble in store once again for the intrepid Slunks, and the word Cdnz is once more being whispered anxiously in all the Chancelleries of Europe between the Quai D'Orsay and Bucharest. EVOE.

o o

"Herr Funk has presented Herr Hitler on behalf of the Reichsbank and German industry with a titian painting of 'Venus Before Herr Mirror.'"—*Indian Paper*.

Must have been misled by the title.



THE WINNER

paper to which they have no right. At least it used to be so in the old days. It may be, so sadly they say has the spirit of Oxford changed, that people nowadays go through the formality of joining the Union before entering its portals. If so, it is high time there was a debate on the subject.

The real voice of Oxford is not to be heard in the Debating Chamber at the Union (not after all an elected body, but one which, like most of the House of Commons, has to pay for its seats): it is to be heard in the Reading-rooms there, under the notices saying "SILENCE"; it is to be heard in private rooms in colleges, up those winding stairs; it is to be heard—since this, I believe, is Eights Week—on barges and in punts. And what is it saying, this mighty voice of Oxford? It is saying, "I'm not feeling too strong this morning, old boy"; it is saying, "The trouble with you is that you're an empiricist"; it is saying, so far as my reddening ears are capable of following it, "Roger seems to have picked a hot one"; and a vast section or *bloc* of it is saying one word over and over again. What that word is I am unable to say, not having my finger on the pulse of the nation's youth, but in my day it was "wizard."

I have set down these few not very original observations because I do not wish people to get a wrong impression of my old University. The fact is that the only way to find out what Oxford is really like is to go and be an undergraduate there. Then you will discover that taken by and large the Oxford undergraduate is a high-spirited, broad-minded, devil-may-care sort of fellow—the salt of the earth and the king of it; and you will feel pleasantly certain that all the poor non-undergraduate clods who visit Oxford to watch you strolling up the High recognise you for what you are, a kind of happy-go-lucky god. The worst of it is

that when you revisit the place ten years later you will see nothing but a lot of silly little perishers in sloppy grey trousers, and you will be forced to admit, with the utmost regret, "Well, the place *has* changed!" H. F. E.

To My Favourite Cricketer

O LORDLY of mien and like to the gods in feature,
Proud knight of the flaming cap and the cultured style,

Bend down from your lofty clouds, O splendid creature—
Bend down and listen awhile!

When men are talking together and words run proudly
Of Edrich, Verity, Paynter, heaven knows who,
Look here, old fellow, let them not smile too loudly
Should I make mention of you.

I didn't think much, you know, of your work last season;
You never produced the form that I felt you could.
Was it love, or liver, or drink? Whatever the reason,
You didn't do me much good.

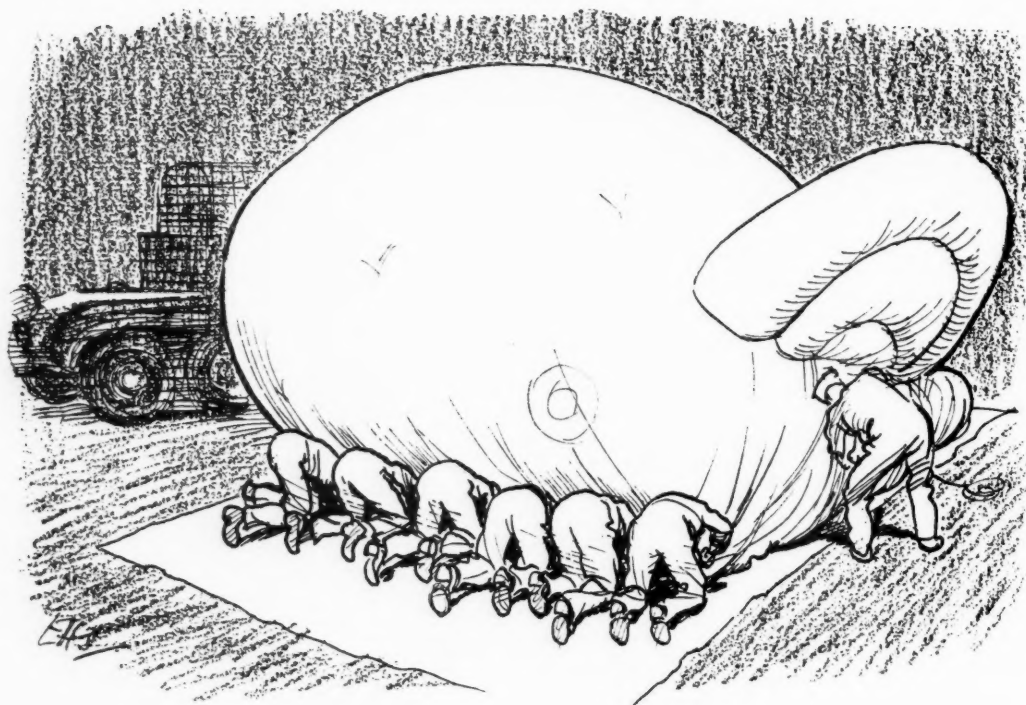
Let this year prove your excellence past all question,
With fifty on fifty in match on glorious match;
And it wouldn't go down too ill—forgive the suggestion—
If you stuck now and then to a catch.

And think of one that has always loved you dearly
And knelt at your shrine and worshipped your natal star
For all the world as though you were yours sincerely—
And, dash it all, so you are.



"... and the dream was so real I find it difficult to believe I am awake."

At the Royal Tournament



"TUCKING UP THE KIDBROOKE BABY"

Technical display (Balloon-Barrage) by R.A.F.

DEAR HERR HITLER,—You'll pardon my informal letter, but after all you have been making the front page so consistently in the last twelve months that I'm beginning to feel I know you quite well.

Well, dear Herr Hitler, I'm writing to tell you all about a show I went to yesterday called the Royal Tournament. You ought to have been with me, because I believe you would have enjoyed it. It's sort of military—if you know the word—and naval and air-forceful; and I'm sure it would have given you a lot to think about. You might even have come to understand us better.

You would at first have been slightly disgusted, I feel, to realise that this Royal Tournament of ours, which consists of a series of turns by different branches of our fighting forces, is not meant to be an impressive parade of a country's might in war, though in your heart you might have welcomed that as a nice change from the usual parades you yourself are always attending. The Musical Drive by "K"

Battery, R.H.A., and the Musical Ride by the Life Guards, for instance, are really designed to show the high standard of skilful driving and the marvellous control over their mounts that these units possess. They don't mean that the Life Guards would ride into action in white-plumed helmets and shining cuirasses, led by four trumpeters in gold-laced coats riding grey horses; and you ought to correct any hopeful tendency on Dr. Goebbels' part to put a story like that around. To tell you the truth, there are only two cavalry regiments and one battery of R.H.A. that *have* horses to-day; and I for one strongly suspect that they are only retained for this annual display. What sort of a Royal Tournament would it be without horses?

Another annual favourite of ours is the Field Gun Display. It is done by gun teams from the Royal Navy. Two teams at a time race into action, dismantle the guns, lift them over walls and chasms, reassemble, fire, and then reverse the whole process. Here again I'm sure you would have been dis-

gusted to note that they don't seem to take it *seriously*. They treat the whole thing as utterly unrelated to war—the glorious Blood Bath in which the human race is purified and the noblest nation of all emerges triumphant to its rightful position of dominance over every other nation. (Or am I plagiarising one of your friends?) These sailors, you would observe, make a competition of it—just the sort of thing the English would do. (If it's any interest to you, the record for the course is three minutes forty-eight seconds—Devonport Stokers, 1938.) And, by the way, the guns actually fire blank! Soppy, eh? Indeed, in view of the fact that the programme states the total weight moved by one crew corresponds to seven upright pianos, I wouldn't put it beyond our amazing nation to run it next year *with* seven upright pianos; whereas in your country, I'm told, if you even order an upright piano from a factory as like as not you get a naval field-gun.

The Physical Training Displays by N.C.O. P.T. instructors and by R.A.F.

men would have been much more to your liking, for I know you adore to see rows of men working as perfectly as automata, whether in our R.A.F. club-swinging or spontaneously applauding during one of your speeches.

The Drill Display by the Royal Marines is also an example of almost mechanical precision. You would have seen them, amongst other things, going through the new dodge of forming threes—but again don't let Dr. Goebbels run away with the idea that it's because we no longer have enough men in the army to form fours. These misunderstandings have occasionally led to trouble. The same trouble might arise if he took the Mimic Battle of the Toy Soldiers, done by boys of the Duke of York's School, as presenting a true picture of our armed forces in action. To appreciate this turn one needs a sense of humour. I don't think you would like it.

But now I must tell you about some of the items you would have really enjoyed. While the Barrage-Balloons, one of our methods of protection against air-raids, would probably have been classed by Marshal Goering as "weapons of offence, designed to encircle a peaceful nation," you would have liked them. And you would just have loved the Display of Modern Infantry Weapons: if you've got good things yourself it's pleasant to know that other people have them too. We, however, hope we won't ever have to use them; we prefer peace. So, I gather from your speeches, do you, but Marshal Goering rather let you

down, didn't he, when he said in one of his speeches about the German Air Force: "As individuals they are peace-loving, but, as a section of the armed forces, are burning to prove to the Fuehrer that his Air Force is invincible." We've learnt that we've got to have an Army, even if we don't use it: other people sometimes think that if they have an army they've got to use it.

But by far the most interesting item of all is the Display by the London Division and their attached troops. These, dear Herr Hitler, are all Territorial Army, and we have you to thank for their present efficiency and up-to-date equipment and training. For, after all, you put the idea into the heads of most of them. Indeed you ought to be proud to hear that the London Division alone has raised over twelve thousand men, and they are still pouring in. Tell Goering when you see him, will you?

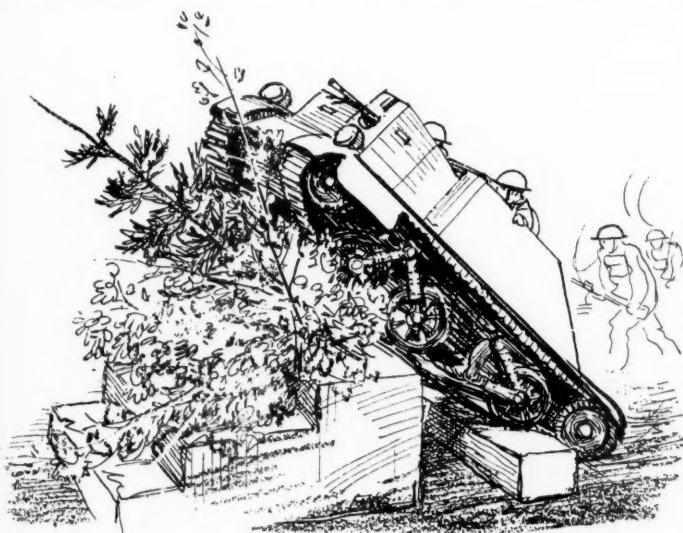
These civilian soldiers do a nice little turn, representing an ambush in an imaginary outpost of Empire, where rebel tribesmen are seeking an outlet for their natural aspirations by attacking an ambulance with two wounded men in it, which has just been disabled by a land-mine. A wireless-car comes up under heavy fire, reports the situation, and soon the first of the relief force arrives, motor-cycle combinations bristling with Bren guns, followed by mortar and machine-gun detachments, and before you can say "Appeasement," and certainly before you could realise just what it means, a jolly scrap is in progress which is

brought to a victorious conclusion. All make-believe, of course: all practice! As I hinted earlier, we don't want to fight, but at the back of my head a refrain is running, though I can't recollect the words that go with it. Can you remember them? A. A.

The Litigious Merchant and the Tactful Solicitor

A LITIGIOUS Merchant, finding himself in trouble with one of his customers, decided to consult a Tactful Solicitor. He accordingly visited one of these paragons of legal learning and placed the facts before him. The Tactful Solicitor said that in his view, having regard to the various aspects of the case, the matter was not one which he could advise his client to pursue. The Litigious Merchant thereupon asked the Tactful Solicitor if he had considered the facts in the light of the Suppression of Supplies Act, 1861, with special reference to Gangrene Brothers Limited *v.* Stickworthy, Trounce, Popplejack & Co., and to Filth, J.'s decision in Sock, Sons & Co., Ltd., *v.* Guzzle and Another. The Tactful Solicitor was about to reply to this broadside of forensic erudition, but the Litigious Merchant would not give way. There was also, he ventured to point out, the Soiled Goods (Protection of Purchasers) Act, 1896, as interpreted by Bulger, L.J., in Porridges, Ltd., *v.* Scavenger Frères, and again by Toots, J., in the Puddlecombe Co-operative Society, Ltd., *v.* Deutsches adolphstickerie G.M.B.H. At this point the Tactful Solicitor thanked the Litigious Merchant for his sound advice and said that he would immediately instruct a team of eminent counsel on the lines which his learned client had so ably indicated. At the subsequent conference with Sir Stiffwith Snaggs, K.C., who was attended by Mr. Stench, K.C., and Mr. Clapworth Cowslip, the Litigious Merchant did all the talking except for the interpolation on two occasions of an impressive "Quite so" by Sir Stiffwith. By the time the matter had reached the High Court and Tripe, J., had delivered one of his more coherent and audible judgments, the Tactful Solicitor was able to contemplate retirement, a section of the Bar had become even more substantially enriched, and the Litigious Merchant had enjoyed himself so thoroughly that he was quite unmoved either by the prodigious costs or by the fact that the case had been well and truly lost.

Moral: ADVICE IS GOLDEN.



"UP, GUARDS, AND AT 'EM!" THE BRITISH BRENAIERS
Display of Bren Carriers by 2nd Battalion Grenadier Guards

Ode

On the London Passenger Transport Board

THE Hanging Gardens of Semiramis
May be as wondrous as the ancients found;
But there are points to our Metropolis,
And I would celebrate the Underground.

It is astonishing that Man should fare
So many hours each morning in the train
To reach the capital, and, being there,
Depart at evening by the train again.
It may be mad. But if we must
Move to and fro like clouds of dust,
Frequent and quick,
Then let us dutifully praise
Lord Ashfield and his mazy ways,
Likewise Frank Pick:
For they have done a wonder never did
By What's-his-name who done the Pyramid.

Here is our Pharaoh—
Nay, here is our Jove,
Under whose aegis
The millions rove
Into Threadneedle Street
And back to Arnos Grove;
These are the moons by whose tremendous sway
The tide of multitudes doth flow and ebb;
Or let me put it in another way—
These are the spiders of the monstrous web,
We the poor flies
Who on the delicate thread
Apostrophise the skies
With "Why's?"
Till we are dead.
For think! Only suppose
One morning from his bed
Lord Ashfield rose
And (with less than his customary bonhomie)
said:

"Frank, we have gone too far.
There is too much movement in the world to-day;
Let there be stillness. Let the people stay
Just where they are.
Stop, trains, trams, buses, trolley-buses too!
Cease, Inner Circle! Halt, the Bakerloo!
Pause, Piccadilly! All transport be taboo!"
And the great Pick made this reply,

"Aye! Aye!"
What should we do?
Under the Act, if memory's correct,
The Government itself would have to bow;
Only the "C" stockholders might object.
And no one cares about stockholders now.

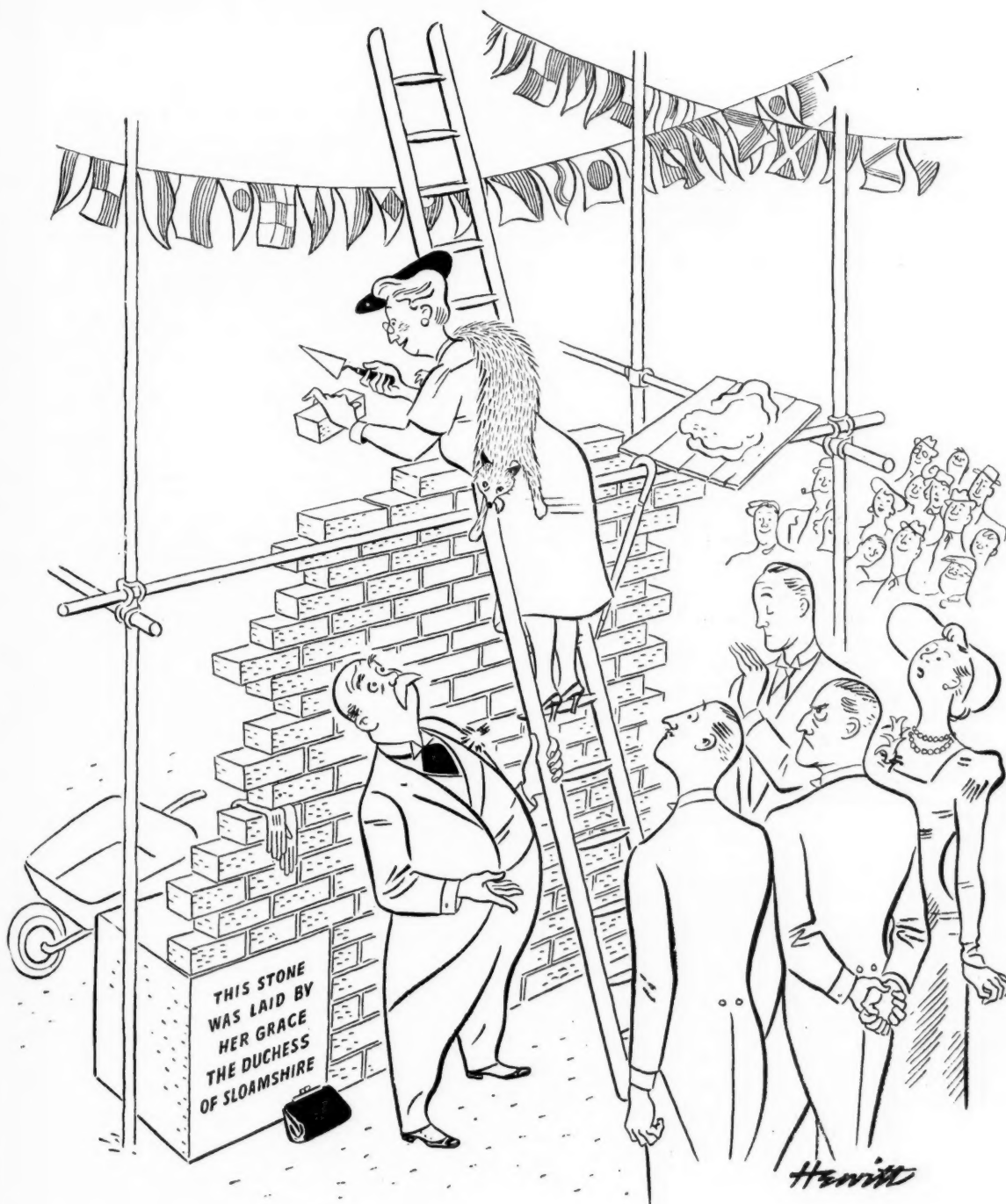
But, far and wide, imagine the dismay
If Greater London were compelled to stay
In statu quo!
For, oh!
No more, like some great serpent at the Zoo,
The Inner Circle coils and coils again;
No more Cockfosters is in touch with Kew;
No more may Chesham come to Chancery Lane;
In vain, in vain to Southend's happy shore
Does Bethnal Green direct the wistful mind.

While Southend's citizens no less deplore
The fate of persons to Southend confined.
All, all is still
At Dollis Hill;
Lovers at Turnpike Lane
Must there remain,
Though invited to dinner
At Putney or Pinner.
But even then
All thinking men,
Denied a passage to their occupations,
Would stand about
And raise an occasional shout
To the attractive architecture of Mr. Pick's new
stations,
And, though they were compelled to hire
Taxi-cabs and coasters,
They would still admire
Mr. Pick's fine posters
As decorations
To the silent stations.

Earth has not anything to show more grand
Than the communications by these men planned.
440 million passengers a year
Are carried by the Underground, I hear.
2,700 trains a day
Serve Charing Cross,
Profit or loss,
In their smooth, swift way.
I wonder if you realise, my boy,
The countless benefits that you enjoy,
Who are too young, maybe,
To recall 1900 A.D.,
The belching funnels
Filling the tunnels,
And were not alive
In 1905.

When Electricity
On fairy feet
Cast out foul Smoke
(And that was no joke)
From the Black Hole that men called Baker Street?
Soon, too, the demon Noise is driven back
(You don't remember how the old trains roared)
By sound-absorber and resilient track:
God bless the London Passenger Transport Board!
(And that, though it seems absurd,
Is, I think, the first time,
That line has occurred
In a lofty rhyme.)

So let us sing the Czars of Locomotion
And all the forces which to them bow down,
Science and Toil,
Welsh Coal and Diesel oil,
And eighty thousand working-men's devotion,
That we may hurry in and out of town.
Only the Thames, that paltry little stream,
Flows unconsidered through the general din,
Unfit to figure in the transport team—
But there, to-day we will not rub that in. A. P. H.



"Please, your Grace, won't you leave the rest to the workmen?"



"I wish you'd mentioned, Miss Titterton, that you've got rhythm."

The Bad Disease

"A H, my good friend," called Captain Romanescu from the door in a voice that made nervous customers fumble for their gas-masks, "how are you? It is very nice for you to comm like this. I hev somm things for you to help me very moch I think. Spikk for the waiter for me, please, somm beer and somm of this Maraschino cherries. You hev tried this together? It is very nice sommtimes.

"Now, you most listen, this is very important. I am comm to England by the flying to see somm very good English doctor. Not this ordinary cheap doctor, bot very good, first-class, most be English. The semm for the doctor like Selfridge for the shop, A 1, clean and very finest. Holly Street, I think. You know somm English doctor like this?"

"I am very sorry to hear about this, Romanescu," I said, "but tell me first, what is your trouble? What is the disease?"

"This is very bedd disease," he said solemnly. "I do not know. Moch pain, moch sickness, very sore, cannot walk, cannot sleep, moch heddick."

"Don't think I want to spoil a good story," I interrupted, "but you seemed to be walking all right when you came in."

"Ah, yes, me, I am all right. This is for my ont. I can explenn. This ont is married, living in Palina, very smoll port in Mohammedan part of Dardania. Last week I am in Palina, I go to see this ont and she is very sick since a long time. She say to me Arabic doctor in Palina is no good, she most comm to London to see first-class English doctor. I say to her, how is thet somm good? You cannot spikk English. It is better for you telling me how you are

sick then I can spikk to English doctor in London and find somm good medicines.

"I hev mekk very complitt examination of my ont and mekk many question. It is like this. You tekk this leg, now—she can go like so, like so and like so, it is all right; bot if she go like so—ouch! it is terrible, very pennfull. Now here is somm question I hev ask, with all answering translate in English for English doctor. I will read you somm of this:—

Question: This heddick, how is it like?

Answer: This heddick is very bedd heddick in the head.

Question: Is this heddick all the time?

Answer: Sommtime it is all the time, sommtime it is joost now.

Question: How is the temperature?

"About this question there is somm troubles because this damn fool Arabic doctor has brekk the thermometer since five-six weeks. Bot there is smoll Dardanian Navy ship in Palina, built in Italy, very modern. I hev borrow from Chief Engineer of this ship somm pyrometer for mekk the measurement. It is not so easy, because this pyrometer is for five hondred degree Centigrade, very smoll dial difficult for reading. Bot I hev mekk reading thirty to forty-five degree Centigrade, it is about right, I think. There is many other question also, I hev write it all down here.

"After soon, I go to see this Arabic doctor. It is very fine house with many advertisement outside for curing the heddick, the sore eye, the leprosy, and so on. I most wait two-three hours for this doctor because he is at the inquest. This is very interesting in Palina, there is new rule, very strong, if anyone dying at any time there most be always the inquest. It is not necessary, I think, because this is very strong religious contry and answer for the inquest most be always the semm, 'It is Will of Allah, his time is finish.'

"When the doctor comm I say to him: 'You understend very well this case of my ont? You can mekk for me somm report to tekk to big doctor in England?'

"He say to me: 'Sure. I understend this case very well. One of the best. I can mekk very full report for you and you tekk this report to London doctor, never mind how good, he will say this is very clever Arabic doctor, quite right.'

"He mekk for me very long report in Arabic. I hev trenslation here for English doctor to read. If it is so good I do not know. He explenn this case is very complicate, very difficult. He say explennation is there is some caliph is born in Palina since three-four hondred years. This caliph is very angry for the new relway is now building in the mountain behind Palina and he spikk to somm djinn and this djinn mekk somm poison smell in the air for revenge for the relway. My ont has breathe somm of this poison smell, so now she is sick. If this relway is brekk op she is all right once more. I think this dead caliph cannot do like this. A little maybe bot not so moch. It is nonsense. Bot it is all here, full report. Also I hev tekk many photograph of my ont—of the leg and the tongue, of the house and the children also, it is all here.

"Now, about this doctor. How is this Dosson of Pinn? You know him? Is he somm good?" A. M. C.

o o

Mothers

HEAR and admire, with honeyed comments bright. These anecdotes of Anne, my heart's delight. Then I'll do likewise whilst you maunder on About your spoilt and boring little John.

Two Paragraphs

"WAIT a minute," said one diarist to the other. "I seem to remember . . . Smith once met him, isn't that so?"

"Smith!" ejaculated the other diarist. "What's the use of that?"

"Well, Smith's *in to-day* isn't he?"

"You might as well point out that the lift-man is in to-day too," the second diarist said. "Merely being in, old boy, doesn't necessarily make one able——"

A boy put his head round the door and asked: "Anyone here been ringin' the League of South-Western Grocers?"

"Put 'em on," said the first diarist, picking up the telephone as the boy withdrew. Waiting, he addressed his partner: "If I can get anything here we needn't bother with Smith. I thought they might know something about that business in 1927. It'll make at least two pars, and we can fill the end with—Hullo? Oh, is that the League of South-Western Grocers? Well, look, I wonder if you can put me on to somebody who—what? Who? . . . Oh. Oh, I see. Oh, all right." He hung up.

"Get the League of South-Eastern Grocers by mistake?" asked his partner.

"It was the commissionaire," the first diarist said glumly. "There's nobody else there on Saturdays, it appears. We'll have to try Smith."

"If people *will* die early on Saturday morning——" said the second diarist, exasperated. "It puts evening papers in a most unsatisfactory position."

Another boy came in with a handful of damp proofs and the first diarist said, "Do you know where Mr. Smith is?"

"Yes," said the boy, going out again.

"He's equipped for life," commented the second diarist.

At this point luckily Smith himself appeared, asking whether anybody had a match. The first diarist got up anxiously and seized him by the coat, saying: "Look, can you write us a couple of pars about old Batwig?"

"Certainly," said Smith. "Who is he?"

"He's dead. It just came on in the tape. You knew him, you used to say he was——"

"What, poor old Batwig dead!" ejaculated Smith in a sorrowful tone. "Good lord! Alas! Eheu! Who'd have thought it! Well, we all have to go some time, I suppose. How sad! Tut, tut! . . . What used I to say he was?" he inquired at length with some curiosity.

"I thought as much," said the second diarist, not without relief. "You never knew the old blighter at all."

"Oh, well," Smith said, lighting a cigarette with a match he found on a desk. "What sort of pars do you want? . . . You can say you saw him only a few days ago and were shocked by the change in his appearance. That's usually pretty safe."

"Batwig died in Jamaica," the first diarist said coldly.

"Looking bronzed and fit," said the second.

"Well, one of the old bromides ought to do. Say that all who knew him—— Wait a minute!" Smith cried suddenly. "Batwig was the chap with the see-saw theory, wasn't he? Then I did meet him once. He explained it to me. He was the old fellow I ran into when I was covering that North and South Bakers or whatever it——"

"League of South-Western Grocers," said the first diarist.

"Have it your own way—I met old Batwig in the corridor, he was suing them or something, I met him with his coat on inside out, and he explained his theory to me."

"Why was his coat on inside out?" the second diarist asked curiously.

"He explained that too," said Smith. "It seems that when he got up that morning, instead of standing back to the window when——"

"Never mind that, never *mind*," interrupted the first diarist. "What about the see-saw theory?"

"Well——" Smith said doubtfully. "He *did* explain it to me, certainly, but—— Well, it was something like this, though I dare say I shan't do it justice. Think of the West End."

"What?"

"I say think of the West End. And then think of the City. Now there's what we newspaper people in our original way call a great exodus from the latter to the former every evening, isn't there? Well, did you ever think of the difference in weight?"

"I never did," said the first diarist after a pause.

"Old Batwig's notion," Smith went on, "was that as the transference of weight from the City to the West End was a regular thing, regular as clockwork, it must——"

"What about Sunday?" the second diarist asked.

"That's the point. His idea was that since it happened every day, Monday to Friday, with a slight difference on Saturday, which he had some way to allow for, the same effect a bit weaker ought to be noticeable on Sunday, even without the change in weight. See-saw, you understand? Like a pendulum."

Silence. After a time the second diarist said: "And the grocers? Where did the grocers come in?"

"One of their vans," Smith replied, "ran into him while he was fooling about in Shaftesbury Avenue with a spirit-level. He sued them."

Again silence.

"I see little opportunity for dignity in these pars," the first diarist said at last.

"We'll give him just one, shall we?" said the second.

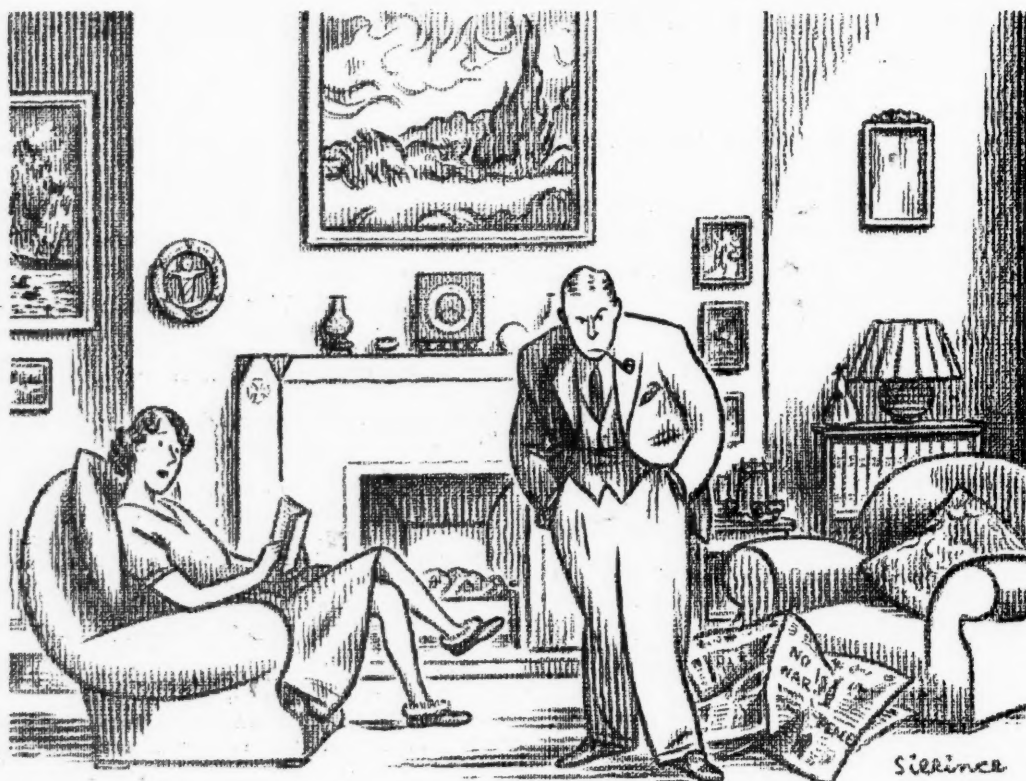
"Out of *Who's Who*."

Smith paused on his way out. "Remember Jamaica," he said: "flavour it with bananas."

R. M.



"Tell me, is there—someone else?"



"I'm absolutely fed up with peace and war!"

Birds'-Nesting

COME, let us go
Where the young leaves grow
And look
By boulder and bush and brook
Where the nest of a bird
Has occurred.
Let us search for the flat
Of the small stonechat
And the well-knit
House of the long-tailed tit;
For the doors
That the woodpecker bores
In the bark,
And the bright-brown eggs of the
lark
Where they bask all day
In the daisied hay;
For the copious homes of water-fowl,
And the catacombs of the owl,
And the little things that the warbler
feeds
In the reeds.
Perhaps we shall strike
The quiet home-life of the shrike,

Or hit
On the succulent egg of the lithe
peewit,
Or the lair of the pied wagtail
And the mother nightingale.
Perhaps where it's damp
We shall stamp
On the nonchalant nest of a snipe,
Or discover the pipe
Or jug
Where the robin sits so snug
Teaching its young to sing
Good-bye to the Spring.
Let us find warm eggs of a shape and
size
And colour too rare to recognise.
Already I see
In the hawthorn-tree
A thickness that might be the thatch
Of the bride nuthatch.
Perhaps there's an inch
Of infant finch
In its nest of fluff
And of woollen stuff

Up there,
Or a pair
(For who can tell?)
Of unfledged ouzels both doing well.
Could there be an auk?
Or the careless haunt of a hawk?
Or a pigeon's rambling perch?
Or a grebe's egg left in the lurch?
Could it be the turtle-dove's retreat?
Or the widgeon's country-seat?
Or the broody hen
Of a willow-wren?
Now I am climbing high
And green stuff goes in my eye,
And I reach
Up into the breach.
Shall I find four eggs or six,
Or a bevy of bunting chicks?
I can feel the moss
And the thin twigs knitted across,
The clay baked hard and fast,
And, at last,
I can feel a heap of slush
In the year-old nest of a thrush.



ENCIRCLEMENT OR THE NEW LAOCOÖN

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Impressions of Parliament

Synopsis of the Week

Monday, May 15th.—Commons: Military Training Bill taken in Committee.

Tuesday, May 16th.—Lords: Administration of Justice (Emergency Provisions) and Coast Protection Bills given Second Reading. Camps Bill taken in Committee.

Commons: Military Training and Reserve Forces Bills taken in Committee.

Wednesday, May 17th.—Lords: Discussion on Wages in Crown Colonies.

Commons: Debates on Militiamen's Pay and Allowances and Reserve of Merchant Shipping.

Monday, May 15th.—The Mappin Terraces of Europe continue to hum with activity, but the Russian bear is still being tempted in secret. The exact size and type of the buns it is being offered was more than Mr. CHAMBERLAIN would divulge this afternoon, though keenly pressed on the state of the negotiations.

The presence of innumerable German delegations solemnly assessing the wealth and strength of Italy is said to be proving a sore trial to patriotic Italians, who see themselves rapidly disappearing into Herr HITLER's capacious pocket. When Mr. BUTLER

admitted that the new appointment of the British Consul at Bratislava as British Consul for Slovakia was tantamount to *de facto* recognition, Commander FLETCHER neatly asked if the Government intended to recognise the *de facto* annexation of Italy by Germany.



REBUKING SATAN

"Military men had a way of expressing their opinions in a very emphatic and peremptory manner."—Mr. LORD GEORGE.

Not content with showering China with the more explosive benefits of their lofty civilisation, the Japanese are encouraging the consumption of drugs by the Chinese in order to lower their resistance. Mr. BUTLER told Sir JOHN HASLAM that there were now thirty-eight opium *hongs* in Shanghai which were under Japanese control. The one pleasing feature of the situation is that in spite of the enlightened policy of Tokyo there is still only one *hong* in Hong-Kong.

Any who dare hold that women are not a refining influence cannot fail to be impressed by the achievement of Dr. EDITH SUMMERSKILL, who, though a comparatively new girl at Westminster, has persuaded the Office of Works to put up a mirror in the Members' cloak-room "for the convenience of both sexes." The House spent one of its skittish minutes when this was announced. The installation of a beauty-parlour equipped with a division-bell which will bring lady Members scurrying out in interesting stages of repair is now thought to be only a matter of time.

The most important contribution during Questions came from Sir KINGSLEY WOOD, who told the House that Rolls-Royce Ltd. are to build a factory near Glasgow where they will make aero-engines for the Air Ministry. Production should begin in

twelve months, the cost will be several million, and about ten thousand men will be employed.

When the Military Training Bill was taken in Committee the Government made various concessions to ensure that conscripts should be well treated by employers, but they resisted Mr. EDE's amendment which deprived an employer of protection if the decline of his business had made reinstatement, or reinstatement in the old position, impossible.

Tuesday, May 16th.—If there should be a war plans have been made for the retreat of Justice. In the Upper House the LORD CHANCELLOR introduced a Bill which would empower him to suspend sittings in London and to disperse the Courts of Law to suitable towns all over the country. Two judges would advise him and, as was done in the last war, the number of a jury would be reduced to seven, except in cases of murder and treason. No prospective towns were mentioned, but it is a pleasant thought that Cheltenham might find a new industry in wife-beating and arson, and that Peacehaven might become the Reno of England.

The Opposition in the Commons continue to press for what, as Mr. PILKINGTON pointed out, are really economic sanctions against the dictator countries. Mr. EDWARDS raised the question of nickel, and Mr. KIRKWOOD, asserting that this country and France



EDITH LEADS THE WAY INTO LOOKING-GLASS HOUSE.

Dr. EDITH SUMMERSKILL obtained the promise of a mirror for the Members' Cloak-room.



A FINANCIAL OBJECTOR

Mr. SHINWELL expresses dissatisfaction with the proposed rates of pay and allowances for militiamen.



"Of course we have to import our foxes."

held a world monopoly (in the ratio of nine to one), declared that without nickel war was impossible. Mr. STANLEY replied that the war use of nickel was small beside its peace-time uses, and that in the view of many an economic boycott was quite the best way of starting a war.

Several interesting points came up in Committee on the Military Training Bill. The first was a Government amendment to make it apply to British residents abroad, which no one minded very much. The next was Mr. WEDGWOOD BENN's suggestion that conscripts should be allowed to vote, even if under twenty-one. He quoted the precedent of the Representation of the People Act of 1918, and found some Conservative as well as solid Opposition support; but in his reply for the Home Office, Mr. PEAKE saw no reason why the conscript should be treated differently from the Regular or Territorial.

For her amendment to exclude Service members from tribunals dealing with conscientious objectors, Mrs. HARDIE was eloquently backed by Mr. LLOYD GEORGE, who retains ineffaceable memories of the military mind,

and Mr. ERNEST BROWN promised to see if he could find a form of words which would meet this difficulty without cramping him in appointments to important posts.

Wednesday, May 17th.—Lord OLIVIER's request for an increase in preference or subsidy for industries in the Crown Colonies in order that better wages could be paid was turned down by Lord DUFFERIN, who insisted that our Colonial policy was already directed towards good wages, which could not always be rated only on their monetary value.

At the end of Questions, Captain ARTHUR EVANS was given leave to bring in a Bill to make licensing justices declare themselves free from evident partialities. He cited the recent and extraordinary case in which the Savoy group of hotels had obtained a licence for a new branch of Simpson's, but had lost it after a three-minute discussion by the London Quarter Sessions. A first-class restaurant had been lost to London which would have provided employment for over two hundred, and he felt it improper that of the justices concerned in the refusal, some were shareholders in companies interested

in rival establishments already selling liquor in the district. While our licensing laws remain grotesque in comparison with those of other and presumably more civilised countries, this seems to Mr. P's. R. an excellent little Bill.

The Supplementary Estimate for militiamen's pay and allowances was introduced by Mr. HORE-BELISHA, who said that one-and-six a day was fair in relation to the Regular's two shillings, and announced that as a result of marriage allowances being given to militiamen of twenty he proposed to reduce the marriage age of the Regular Army to the same figure. Subsequent debate showed fairly general approval of the new pay and a very strong feeling, shared by all parties, that dependents' allowances should be as generous as possible.

Later, when Mr. STANLEY outlined his plans for organising a reserve of merchant shipping, two ship-owners, Sir CHARLES BARRIE and Colonel ROFNER, regretted that in the circumstances sales abroad were not to be completely prohibited.

State shipping, that's what it was, hurray! said Mr. SHINWELL.

How I Lost Half-a-Crown

ORIGINALLY one had planned to call this article, quite simply and straightforwardly: "An Endeavour to Prove that a Running Commentary is Well Within the Power of the Amateur. Dedicated to the B.B.C."

But that title, though absolutely comprehensive and not without an allure of its own, had the drawback of being thoroughly misleading, so it seemed better to change it altogether. Instead it will be:

HOW I LOST HALF-A-CROWN.

"This is the tennis-court at home and play hasn't begun yet because it's drizzling. I told you all along it would, Charles, and yet here are the Battlegates all in pure white, pretending that it was as dry as a bone when they left home; if I'm to go on doing this commentary, and after all a bet's a bet, it's no use my breaking off to say How'd'y do to the Battlegates. Look after them, Charles, only explain what I'm doing or they'll think I've gone mad. Well, this is still the tennis-court at home and it's not doing much more than spitting, and here are the Battlegates, and really it's rather dull at the moment because they're just complaining about the weather. I don't know if it's much use for me to say: 'Now I'll let listeners hear the voices of the crowd for themselves,' because really the crowd, such as it is—Charles and the children and the Battlegates and Aunt Emma with her knitting—are only speaking now and then, with quite a lot of reluctance, and they're evidently determined to leave all the work to me. If you *haven't* told them why I'm doing this, Charles, it's extraordinarily unfair of you and will start a totally unfounded rumour all over the neighbourhood. Whilst we're waiting till play begins, which'll have to be until at least one more player turns up, I should like to describe the garden to you, although I should like it better if the tulips had been more of a success and the wisteria wasn't over. However, luckily I'm let off that because here comes Miss Dodge carrying two rackets, of all the affected nonsense. Charles, here's Miss Dodge. Oh, Miss Dodge, I can't explain exactly at this moment but Charles will tell you about the bet I've made. But listeners, I dare say, will like to hear that Miss Dodge is wearing her new yellow washing-silk and no hat, but a

little net. Miss Plum has just turned the car round—it doesn't matter about the grass, Miss Plum, people are always doing that, but don't expect me to say another word—only ask Charles or someone to explain. And now Miss Plum has got out of the car and hasn't got any tennis racket at all, so listeners will realise that they were unjust about Miss Dodge, who was only carrying one for each of them, *not* two for herself.

"Now things have suddenly begun to move very fast. Charles is screwing up the net, it's much too low, one of the children has jumped over it—darling, don't do that—now it's rather too high—Mrs. Battlegate is pointing this out to Charles and she'll probably put him off his stroke for the rest of the . . . Here come quite a lot of them all at once, Laura and Uncle Egbert, and Canon Pramm, and the two kittens.

Oh, look—I mean listen—the Canon is just rushing after a ball and looking too sweet for words. The kitten has on a bright-blue blazer. I'm sorry, I think I got that wrong. The kitten was running after the ball and it's the Canon who is wearing the blazer. Well, the whole scene is very colourful and I only wish to heaven you could all see it for yourselves, because of all the exhausting and utterly maddening undertakings . . . Now Charles is arranging the first set and he has forgotten everything we settled at lunch. Shall I come and help you, Charles? I ought to have won the bet by now and I have a severe sore throat already. How do you do, Mrs. Battlegate? You must just let me explain, because otherwise you may think it rather odd of me . . ."

So now you see why I changed the title.

E. M. D.



At the Play

"INQUEST" (DUKE OF YORK'S)

I KNOW very little about coroners' inquests. I don't know, for instance, if coroners are permitted to fill their courts with the sound of their roaring, or if it is considered all right for examining barristers to pad about as if they were zoo-keepers, at one moment stroking the panda and at the next bullying the lion. Perhaps these things happen in the country, probably they don't in London; but anyway they do here.

A murder play conducted entirely, except for a brief Prologue, in a coroner's court held in the schoolroom of a small Cornish town, it is a straightforward little piece relying for half its effect on good sketches of character and on the well-observed presentation of a country scene. In its naturalness (for which Mr. CAMPBELL GULLAN, as producer, must share the credit) it is distinctly refreshing, for so much stage crime is committed and investigated by flat puppets bearing small resemblance to the human race that one is delighted to find a doctor being called away from court in the middle of his evidence by a sudden confinement.

The ace hidden in Mr. MICHAEL BARRINGER's sleeve is the one big twist in an otherwise uncomplicated plot. I confess that until it was finally put on the table it had me beaten, but at the same time I doubt if it is ingenious enough to resist for three Acts the probings of more expert students of crime. Nor am I convinced that the *dénouement* is strictly fair. We are left guessing at the methods by which the eminent K.C. bridges a very wide gap in his deductions, and not altogether content to feel that unless an extremely lucky piece of evidence about which we are not told has fallen into his hat he has arrived at his solution more by telepathy than by intelligence. Tradition allows no visa for intrusion into this kind of play to barristers with second sight. If it did, the bottom would fall out of the whole business.

The play is dominated by the personality of *The Coroner*, a strongly

written part played admirably by Mr. HERBERT LOMAS. Whenever I see Mr. LOMAS I wonder how he came to be on the stage, and not hunting muscle-bound buccaneers with a Bible in some

and voice it is he. He speaks English magnificently, as if it were a powerful psalm charged with solemn revelation, and there is an uncompromising quality about him which CROMWELL would have been quick to use. In the portrayal of rugged character he is an outstandingly good actor.

His *Coroner* is a rural martinet, put on his mettle by the presence in his court of Stephen O'Neale, K.C. (Mr. GULLAN), who is holding a watching brief for a young widow, Margaret Hamilton (Miss ANTOINETTE CELLIER), about to marry his nephew Richard (Mr. ANTHONY HAWTREY). Her husband has been dead for a year, but his body has been exhumed owing to the discovery, in the roof of the cottage they had shared, of a revolver containing a spent cartridge. He is found by the Home Office pathologist to have been shot with a bullet of the same calibre, and not to have died, as it was thought, of a diseased heart. The revolver is known to have been bought

by Margaret at the local ironmonger's. Moreover it is common knowledge—and what knowledge in the country is not common?—that Richard had come often to the cottage and that Hamilton had been jealous of him.

Browbeaten by the *Coroner*, who is increasingly suspicious of her, Margaret is driven into damaging admissions which only stop short of the murder. This she hotly denies; but the verdict of the jury would have damned her if O'Neale had not been there. How he saves her I must not say. Mr. GULLAN plays him adroitly, making him appear at first a gentle fussy fellow, and gradually working him up until he has the little court goggling at his eloquence and the cantankerous old *Coroner* sitting back shaken by his thunder. The duel between these two is the main attraction of the evening.

Miss CELLIER's performance is all that it should be, for she establishes Margaret's integrity while leaving us our cherished doubts. Miss HILDA TREVELYAN plays Hamilton's mother most discreetly. Mr. JAMES WOODBURN's Scottish doctor is good comedy, and Mr. HAWTREY lends an air of conviction to Richard in a position nobody could envy. ERIC.



CROSS QUESTIONING

The Coroner Mr. HERBERT LOMAS
Margaret Hamilton Miss ANTOINETTE CELLIER

remote corner of the earth, for if ever a man had the fire of CALVIN in his eye



ANOTHER INQUISITIVE MAN

Mrs. Wyatt Miss HILDA TREVELYAN
Stephen O'Neale, K.C. Mr. CAMPBELL GULLAN

"BRIDGE HEAD" (WESTMINSTER)

In one of the pleasantest of all good wishes the central figure of *Bridge Head*, *Stephen Moore* (Mr. WILFRID LAWSON), is told: "May the good God be for ever wondering at your great good fortune!" But as far as Mr. LAWSON is concerned there is no great good fortune to wonder at in his part in this play. It is a study of a man absorbed in his work in Irish Land Settlement, a study which gives all too little scope for the rich mercurial qualities which make Mr. LAWSON the great actor he is. It is a play which as far as the story goes does not need Ireland at all, and makes no use of that unique spiritual texture which runs through the great Irish plays. The spectacle of the head of the office, of his assistants, down to the latest newcomer at the end, could be placed almost anywhere in the Empire. Mr. LAWSON's *Stephen Moore* is not particularly an Irishman. In the last Act, when we see him at the retiring age-limit, packing his bags for good, we are watching something in what might be called perhaps the *Mr. Chips* tradition—the presentation on the stage of Dr. JOHNSON's dictum that there is always something rather sad about anything which a man is consciously doing for the last time.

The work of land officers under the Free State, transferring difficult and greedy people, touching local populations with the firm hand of officialdom in the matter which concerns and excites them most, is represented as uphill and exhausting and, except on a long view, thankless enough work. Its effect on *Stephen Moore* has been to drive him in on his work. He has never married, he has apparently no hobbies or outside interests, and in the first two Acts Mr. LAWSON, though he is on the stage most of the time, has nothing of much interest to show us beyond a man, equally undeterred by blandishments or threats, going ahead with his duty as he sees it.

The final Act, which is given over to the business of his last day in the office, falls some twelve years later, and Mr. LAWSON, who ages with a

success which is in marked contrast to the other characters, gives an exhibition of well-controlled emotion. But all through, alike with *Stephen Moore* and his two chief assistants, *Hugh*

O'Neill (Mr. STEPHEN MURRAY) and *John Kearney* (Mr. ADRIAN BYRNE), there seems a rather unnecessary tension and sacrifice of everything to the work of the office—a tension which would be much more in keeping if this were a war play and the land settlement office Army headquarters.

There is something immensely refreshing about the arrival at the end of *Philip Watersley* (Mr. JOHN BROOKING), the newest recruit, an extremely English type of young man whose only interest in life is golf and fishing. It is implied that he is in for a rude awakening, and that he too will settle down to the work and nothing but the work; but when the curtain falls he is still thoroughly cheerful and balanced, prepared to do his job but not to let it devour the whole of his life.

The Third Act stands very much by itself, and what plot and action there is in the play is limited to the first two and is not so much a story as an exhibition of what the dramatist offers us as a representative selection of unattractive and not very entertaining Irish people. Much the best of them is *Dan Dolan* (Mr. CHARLES VICTOR), who embodies

the toughness and pluck as well as the egoism of the peasant battling against his neighbours and officialdom. There is *Mrs. Marcus Morrissey* (Miss CHRISTINE HAYDEN), of whom a neighbour well says when she has expressed an amiable sentiment, "She means it, the creature, at the time. We all mean well from time to time." There is her son *Michael* (Mr. JACKSON GILLIS), and there is *Maurice Mockler* (Mr. TONY QUINN) and, in a higher social walk, *Dermot Barrington* (Mr. EDWARD LEXY).

As the scene of this play is the land agents' office, these people, when they come into it, come in to wheedle or to complain and to exhibit their fierce jealousies. By an ingenious turn the dramatist provides a Japanese gentleman, *Mr. Gosuki* (Mr. J. HWFA PRYSE), who is studying land policy and is busy with his little notebook, and so can play the rôle of a visitant from another sphere, underlining in contorted English the satirical points which the dramatist makes. D.W.



FOREIGN INTERVENTION

Maurice Mockler Mr. TONY QUINN
Inari Gosuki Mr. J. HWFA PRYSE
Dan Dolan Mr. CHARLES VICTOR



GRADES IN BUSINESS EFFICIENCY

Martin Mr. JOHN C. BLAND
Hugh O'Neill Mr. STEPHEN MURRAY
Stephen Moore Mr. WILFRID LAWSON



"That is the end of the Second News."

Sunday Travel

CATCHING Inner Circle trains on a Sunday morning is a different matter from catching them during the week, so I will consult a time-table. Then my arrival at Bayswater Station will coincide with the arrival of the King's Cross Inner Circle train. No time will be wasted, and I shall be at King's Cross at 10.10 to catch an excursion to go North to see my mother. If I had risen when called, if both my shoe-laces had not broken, and if it were possible to consult a time-table with one hand only, I could have breakfast as well. As it is I shall waive breakfast and look up a train between Bayswater and King's Cross.

As it happens there are no trains between Bayswater and King's Cross. Reduced fares for football teams, tickets for dogs and perambulators, cheap evening rates for theatre-goers—yes; but there are no trains between Bayswater and King's Cross. This is absurd. Was it not last Sunday that I

left a pair of gloves and a copy of *Make Yourself a Gardener* in a train at King's Cross when I found I had overshot Euston Square?

Placing the time-table in the waste-paper basket therefore, I glance at the clock and leave the room with a faint cry. Except for an off-white cat with whom I arrive simultaneously on the top step, Elderberry Terrace is empty, and as my ankle is not actually broken I start for Bayswater Station at a brisk limp, consoled in part by the satisfaction that my wallet already contains my main-line ticket purchased with uncustomary foresight last evening. Queensway (late Queen's Road) is also empty. The clocks over the cut-price Perfumery, the Back-in-a-Morning Cleaners and the Half-guinea Shoe Shop indicate a mean time of 9.40.

I must be at King's Cross in half an hour.

I enter the booking-hall to the rumble of a departing train. "King's

Cross?" I say to the man in uniform carelessly. He continues to gaze at a dress-hire advertisement. "Another in twelve minutes," he says. He appears not to care. Exerting all my charm I ask if it will get me to King's Cross by 10.10 to catch the excursion to go North to see my mother; but he has begun a loud conversation with a colleague named Charlie far down below on the platform. On being pressed he says "Might." "Might is right," think I, looking at the station clock. I am in a dilemma, so I go out to look for a taxi.

It is evident to me that Queensway (late Queen's Road) has never witnessed a taxi. It has never witnessed anything. There is nothing whatever to be seen in any direction. The surface of Queensway (late Queen's Road) is polished and without blemish. Wheels have never revolved upon it.

At this point I realise that my guardian angel is on holiday. How

otherwise have these two people materialised from this uninhabited area to occupy the station's two telephone-booths? It is obvious at a glance that they are hirelings of fate, employed expressly to occupy telephone-booths. They appear to be saying nothing, merely standing there lumpishly, making a feeble show of holding the receivers to their ears.

I must be at King's Cross in twenty-five minutes.

I must be at King's Cross in twenty minutes.

In telephone directories I never know where to look for taxis. In this case matters are not simplified by the A-K section being in the L-Z cover, the L-Z section in the A-K cover, and both being upside-down. There is only one nearby taxi-rank. I dial with a damp finger. The number is engaged. I dial again with a damper finger. The number is unobtainable. I have an acid discussion with a female voice which is rude to me and then becomes unobtainable also. The telephone-booth is full of steam as I emerge and apply for a ticket to King's Cross. The booking-clerk, who must hear as clearly as I the rumour of an incoming train, finishes what he is reading and dismounts from his stool. He turns over a lot of second-hand tickets lying about in front of him but is unable to find one to fob off on me and saunters out of sight, humming a sarcastic tune.

Unhurt except for a handful of grazed knuckles I hurl myself at the train. It consists of one carriage only and is a quaint survival of olden times. It is also an Edgware Road train and does not go to King's Cross, so I rebound on to an automatic machine. I think that it would perhaps be a time-saving device to tear my main-line ticket into its proper halves, marked "R" and not marked "R" respectively. A train approaches as I fumble in my steaming pocket. There is no wallet there. I have been robbed. Police. 999. I slap my pocket vigorously and cause a paroxysm of coughing.

But I have not been robbed after all. I have merely left my wallet in my week-day suit.

For the first time I give way to panic. I run, I cough, I stream with perspiration. I bound at the staircase and ascend like a helicopter, recklessly throwing my fourpenny ticket away as my train shudders to rest below me.

I must be at King's Cross in a quarter of an hour. I must collect my wallet from Elderberry Terrace and be at King's Cross in a quarter of an hour. Is there a hope? Is there a chance? Is there a taxi?

A taxi is coming hesitantly out of

Moscow Road. It stops to allow three more to pass. Two more taxis are loitering dropsically outside the very booking-hall. They solicit me. They inquire whether I want a taxi. They call me Sir. I give a flood of directions to the nearest. I shut my thumb in the door. At Elderberry Terrace I accomplish six flights of stairs in both directions in eight seconds, but even so when I appear wallet in hand the driver is entering the house suspiciously. I speak roughly to him and press my smoking back against the icy upholstery.

I have told the driver I must be at

King's Cross by 10.10 to catch the excursion to go North and see my mother. Now I can do no more; the matter is out of my hands, and in resignation there is utter bliss.

I shall smoke an unhurried cigarette, for no haste of mine can avail me now. Searching for matches in my waistcoat pocket I come across my main-line ticket, placed there last night as a precaution against forgetting it. The Praed Street lights turn red, and I recollect someone saying that the taxi is London's slowest form of transport.

Ah, well, my mother has known me for many years now.



"'Ere, these ain't the leaves you eat, these are the ones what keeps the rain out."

Investigations of Hector Tumbler

Tumbler Takes a Hand

IT will be a long time, I fancy, before the world forgets Hector Tumbler. If the word immortality means anything, nay, if common gratitude means anything, eternal fame must surely be the portion of the man who solved crime after baffling crime in which the police had not even ventured to meddle—the man whose name is held in awe wherever convicts meet, from Bergen to Gibraltar, from Sebastopol to Leamington Spa. I, at any rate, shall never forget the first time I met the great detective.

One day, some fifteen years ago, I was lunching with a friend in a Chinese restaurant in South Kensington. It was rather a cosmopolitan place: Chinese generals rubbed shoulders with gauchos from the Argentine, Middle-Western dentists peered into the open mouths of Afghan bandits, and Manchester business-men played dominoes with other Manchester business-men. I was gazing abstractedly under the table when my friend suddenly tapped me on the arm.

"Don't look," he said, "but that man by himself over there is Hector Tumbler."

The words filled me with excitement. I stood on the table to get a better view. But at first sight I was rather disappointed. I had expected something like the typical detective of fiction, I suppose; instead I saw a man who might have passed unnoticed anywhere. Tumbler was extremely tall and thin, with a red ascetic face. The plain police-sergeant's uniform and purple tweed shooting-hat which he wore accentuated his air of a Nonconformist minister on holiday. Yet I was drawn to the man; even then I felt a foretaste of the love and veneration which he was afterwards to inspire in me. With some difficulty I persuaded my friend to introduce me.

The first meeting of a great man and his future biographer must always be memorable. I remember that Tumbler was just getting up rather hurriedly when we went across to his table. The ceremony of introduction over, he stared at me for some moments in complete silence. Then with a sudden movement he covered his face with a large silk handkerchief and, after poking me in the chest once or twice with a huge parti-coloured umbrella, left the room. Coming from any other man I should have put this behaviour down as deliberate rudeness. But Tumbler somehow was different.

My anxiety to further the acquaintance was unabated. And it happened that my reasons were not purely social ones. For some time past I had been puzzled by the mysterious deaths of one member of my household after another. The trouble began one afternoon about six months before, when I found Phantomsby, my butler, stretched out lifeless in the picture-gallery with a bloodstained rake beside him, and I had scarcely given orders for the body to be carried away when the cook was found in the library stabbed with a pruning-knife. So it went on. Nor were these events confined to my domestic staff, for several friends of mine died mysteriously while staying in my house. The strangest feature of the whole business was that in every case I found Henwhistle, my aged gardener, loitering in a suspicious manner in the neighbourhood of the corpse. While it would have been foolish of course to take an alarmist view, I did almost begin to think that a murderer was at work.

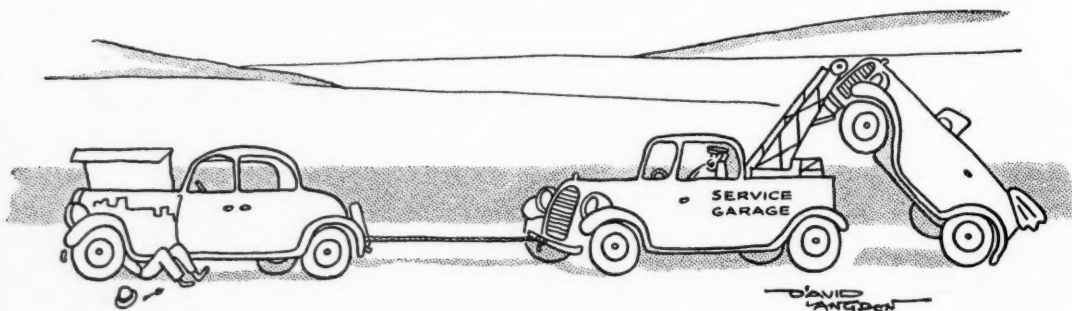
About a week, then, after this first meeting with Tumbler I knocked at the door of the derelict railway-carriage where he lived, not a stone's-throw from Hyde Park Corner. I found the

great man sitting in a basket-chair, playing a trombone and reading a newspaper through a pair of field-glasses. He had his feet in the fire and the whole room, or rather the whole compartment, was filled with a smell of burning. He jumped up and shook hands with me warmly. Another moment and he had gone rapidly through my pockets, transferring twelve and fivepence in small change to a vase on the luggage-rack. Later I was to grow familiar with these and similar mannerisms, and to love Tumbler the more for them: at present they merely filled me with surprise.

I found myself faltering out the story I had come to tell. Tumbler cut me short. Before I had uttered more than three or four words he seemed to have grasped every detail of the case. He had my overcoat on almost before I was aware that I had lost it. Another moment and we were outside the door. An hour later, over tea in the library of my house, we were holding a conference.

During my absence the case had been further complicated by the discovery of the dead bodies of two housemaids in the greenhouse. In fact of the whole staff the only survivor was now Henwhistle, and he, I noticed, was pacing up and down outside the library window throughout the whole of our conference, occasionally pressing his ear to the glass. Tumbler looked grave.

"It's a particularly baffling case," he said. "You see, there are so many inconsistencies. First the butler is knocked on the head with a rake, then the cook is stabbed with a pruning-knife, and the housemaids are found dead in the greenhouse; and the gardener—" He stopped for a moment and a light came into his eyes; then it died away and he shook his





"I shudders me shoulders, Mrs. Smale, and I says to meself, 'I'm not one to count me bushels before they're 'atched.'"

head. "No," he said, "I can't get it—yet."

Then he suddenly sat bolt upright.

"I can solve this problem," he said slowly, "given two conditions. First, I must have absolute silence for twenty-four hours. Second, I must have your house put under twenty foot of water."

I gasped at the sheer originality of this plan. Why had I not thought of it myself, fool that I was? Of course! If the house were under water, any more bodies must come floating to the surface. And if the murderer were in the house, his body would be among them.

But as it turned out Tumbler's plan was never put into execution; for at that moment Henwhistle burst into the room, brandishing a spade, and hurled himself upon us. But we were too quick for him. Then, seeing that he was observed, Henwhistle muttered something about a new flower-bed and began digging up the floor near the book-cases.

For a moment I was deceived. Not so Tumbler. A light had come into his eyes again and this time it did not die away. He stepped forward.

Next minute things began to happen

quickly. There was a jingle of metal, a shrill cry punctuated by a prolonged scuffling, a loud report, a blinding flash, a crash of glass and a rumble of falling masonry. It was all very confusing. I heard Henwhistle's motor-bicycle starting up in the distance, and then with a shock of surprise I realised that Tumbler had handcuffed himself.

For some time we looked at each other in silence. It was my first experience of Tumbler's methods. But as I went to the tool-shed to fetch a file I knew instinctively that it would not be my last.



"You don't think he'll look in this, do you? My water-pistol's inside."

Our Booking-Office

(By Mr. Punch's Staff of Learned Clerks)

War—but not Magnificent

MOST wars have been unnecessary and nearly all have been mismanaged. A war which is pre-eminent both for the insufficiency of its occasion and the inefficiency with which it was waged is the theme of *Crimea* (CAPE, 15/-), a piece of historical writing at once vigorous in narrative and rigorous in commentary. Mr. C. E. VULLIAMY has made a careful study of the documents, some unpublished, and there can be no doubt that his strictures are as well found as they are drastic—indeed he has plenty of expert contemporary support for them. Started by the ambition of one Emperor and the vanity of another, the truculence of an English statesman and the arrogance of an English diplomatist, the Crimean War was hopelessly bungled by nearly everyone who had a leading part in its conduct. Mr. VULLIAMY concludes that "the only true celebrities of the whole campaign were an English nurse and a Russian engineer"; and FLORENCE NIGHTINGALE's great effort should never have been necessary, nor should TODLEBEN have been allowed to construct his fortifications. Mr. VULLIAMY's descriptions of the great battles are extraordinarily vivid, and he insists in gruesome detail on the horrors of camp and hospital. Should his indignation in

relation to so old a story appear excessive, the explanation is that he is writing not only history but a tract for the times. He is depicting war "in its essential unchanging aspect." His amusing chapters on the meetings of VICTORIA and LOUIS NAPOLEON, and the Queen's sentimental reactions to them, lend relief to a grim and inglorious tale.

India Takes and Gives.

There are two sides to the second instalment of Mrs. EVELYN BELL's memoirs: a moving picture of British India and a charming portrait of the author. Beginning with more than a little aversion, the newly-married wife of a young Professor at Poona faced her breaking-in by Anglo-Indian society as ruefully as any other English hoyden. But India won her heart—a heart well worth winning; and when her husband resigned before measures of *swaraj* made his work impossible her devotion abounded in regrets. *Memory Be Good* (JOSEPH, 10/6) is a highly adventurous record—its peak of horror the writer's part in the wreck of the *Egypt* in 1922. But its considered review of the deterioration of Anglo-Indian standards is a weightier matter; though there is a fine tribute to the WILLINGDOONS and Lord LLOYD and to the many who have combined public dignity, personal abstemiousness and disinterested work. If we have undermined India's social structure it is "by introducing Big Business and the system of examinations." But surely the fact that these vested interests have

worked equal havoc in Europe might be allowed to mitigate so conscience-stricken a view of our responsibilities in Asia.

Wild-Fowler

Grey Goose is a gun-punt which harries

The geese and the ducks and the rest
Of the fowl of the wide estuaries,

A sport which of all sports is best,
Says Mr. M. BRATBY, who chooses

This name of his ship for a book
which I've found

Inspiring in spite of the cripples one
loses

When the flock has been faithfully
"browned."

Here's a work of technique for the
stalker

Of fowl; both the old hand and new
May learn of it; e'en PETER HAWKER,

The grudging, might learn of it too;
And could he come back from shores
loner

Than ever at dawn lay his tideways
of Poole,

He'd admit that *Grey Goose* was sea-
worthy, her owner

Not quite and entirely a fool.

So if you would pit your poor cunning
'Gainst that of Ulysses, the goose,

There is all the finesse of punt-gunning
And even perhaps its excuse

In this book which G. BLES has to sell
you;

And, if you abjure the wholesale
cannonade

Broadcast in an acre of brent, let me
tell you

That the author will "almost per-
suade."

An Itinerant Humanist

To occupy a Chair of Philosophy in a great university is of course to be a learned man. But Professor IRWIN EDMAN of Columbia knows how to carry his learning lightly. On the other hand, even when taking a *Philosopher's Holiday* (CONSTABLE, 10/-), he is always a philosopher. He looks at the world and its inhabitants through the eye of reason, but of reason tempered with humour and charity. And he delights to discover philosophy in others, provided that they do not expound it in five hundred pages of typescript and then expect him to read them; and particularly to find it in unexpected places, as in a "gob" from the Brooklyn navy yard, or a brother and sister who kept a radio shop in Vermont.

M. PLATON, the exquisitely-named physician of Autun, who cured him of an internal disturbance by the vivacity and variety of his conversation, wanted to found a Society of



THE NEW HUSSAR HESSIANS AND PANTS

"SEE, I'VE DROPPED MY HANDKERCHIEF, CAPTAIN DE VERE!"

"I KNOW YOU HAVE, MISS CONSTANCE. I'M VERY SORRY. I CAN'T STOOP, EITHER!"

George Du Maurier, May 25th, 1878

Itinerant Humanists. It could have had no fitter member than Professor EDMAN; for he is above all things a humanist, and he is a traveller, both in time and in space.

He recreates the New York of his youth and remembers his teachers and past pupils; and he wanders in France and Sicily and Syria, always meeting someone whose talk he finds worth recording. And if his humanity is large his criticism is keen, as when he anatomises intellectual snobbery. These essays of his, separate but unified by personality, are commended to all who cherish sweetness and light.

Poems for To-day

People usually unmoved by poetry will probably melt towards Lord GORELL's latest collection, *Last of the English and Other New Poems* (MURRAY, 6/-), for he gives expression to many feelings that are general just now. Love of country, hatred of violence: as to these we have seldom been more unanimous, and Lord GORELL writes well of them, with here and there a gem that any poetry-lover might acclaim. "Last of the English," cast in dramatic form, is in three parts. The first, with some fine lines in it, depicts HAROLD just before Hastings; the second and best—the subject adorns every pen that writes of him—THOMAS MORE at the moment when he first knew that he must defy the King; the third a charwoman of our own day to whom various shades, including NELSON and QUEEN VICTORIA, appear and speak appropriately of their country. In spite of the charwoman's rather cynical conclusion—

"If they don't put up the
price of a cup o' tea
I don't see how it'll
matter much to me,"

Lord GORELL's thesis is that English courage and love of country are unchanging.

Two-Dollar Dreadful

To judge by her continued publication of best-sellers of the *Anthony Adverse* type, America has more patience with the historical three-decker than we have. The derring-do of a family of Virginian merchants and shipbuilders in the momentous years that opened the War of Independence is the subject of Mr. F. VAN WYCK MASON's *Three Harbours* (JARROLD, 8/6), a bloody (and on occasion rather beastly) record of pecuniary, amatory and patriotic adventures in Norfolk, Va., Boston and Bermuda. His hero, *Rob Ashton*, endeavours in vain to steer clear of Patriots and Tories, to take the cash in hand and waive the rest, and to enjoy the society of his charming and capable wife. But fate is too much for him. *Peggy* succumbs to a hideous death and *Rob* is reserved for a titled English adventuress whose diary, ingeniously faked from a genuine contemporary source, provides the book's only sustained attempt to avoid modern American idiom. The most appealing character

of a long muster-roll is *Kate*, the illegitimate bond-girl, whose painstaking career of unremunerative vice, under principals reminiscent of the immortal Mrs. BROWNRIGG, culminates in the legalised protection of a retired English colonel.

Great Endeavour

In *Greenland Journey* (BLACKIE, 12/6) the story of the 1930-31 German Expedition has been told by various members of the party and from ALFRED WEGENER's diary, and ELSE WEGENER has overcome most of the difficulties of editing it. With so many contributors a certain amount of disjointedness was almost inevitable, but this does not prevent the record from being one of great heroism. Through the organisation of ALFRED WEGENER the winter station was eventually established, and the brief account that is given of life at Eismitte is in itself a proof of the enduring courage of these explorers. That the leader in this effort to add to the world's scientific knowledge lost his life will always be deplored by those of us who recognise and revere a brave man. Both the maps and illustrations are welcome additions to a volume which has been carefully translated by WINIFRED M. DEANS.



"Trouble is, by the time we are conscripted there may be no tanks!"

A Promising Recruit

TOD CLAYMORE's name is unfamiliar to readers of detective fiction, but *You Remember the Case* (NELSON, 7/6) contains so many outstanding qualities that assuredly another promising recruit has appeared in the field where writers of sensational novels congregate. Mr. CLAYMORE is the hero of his own story, and in telling it he not only sets a puzzling (yet by no means insoluble) problem, but also

sees to it that his stage is occupied by characters who are both lively and life-like. In fact he writes with an assurance that suggests an author of wide experience. He must, however, be careful to prevent his exuberance from bolting with him. *Major Wilkin* is an admirable cock-shy at whom to cast ridicule, but as a Chief Constable he is grotesque.

We know all too little about our great Voluntary Hospitals, their number and organisation, the special services that each can give; but even the most ill-informed know that their welfare is of vital concern to everyone. *The Hospital Guide, 1939* (published by the Advisory Hospital Committee, price 3d.), will help to dispel ignorance and therefore inevitably increase practical interest in the Hospitals' well-being. For no one can read this admirably informative Guide without being inspired to help the great work that is its subject.

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